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and if we assert Chaucerian retouchings of the *Parlement of Foules* for Cambridge, what shall we do with the peculiar *Anelida* readings of Oxford, part of which Skeat adopts and part of which he passes by, with a sureness of instinct especially his own?

The great value of the Oxford Group lies, then, in the clearness with which each step of its descent can be traced, and the certainty with which we can work back to a ms. two degrees nearer Chaucer than the existing volumes. The value of Cambridge is still unproven. It contains that version of the prologue to the *Legend* which according to much recent argument is the later, copies of the *Troilus* and of the *Canterbury Tales* which are not of the earlier type in either case (this I must elsewhere establish for the *Canterbury Tales*), a copy of Lydgate's *Temple of Glass* which Schick thinks has been altered by other hands, and a text of the *Parlement of Foules* which Koch treats as containing corrections direct from Chaucer. There is no parallelization of the two types, Oxford and Cambridge, except in this one poem; but an assertion such as Koch's is untenable until Cambridge as a personality has been conjured up before students and the contact of his ms. with Chaucer proved. Until the man Gg has been realized for us on the one hand and the ample material for the reconstruction of Oxford used on the other, we shall still speak in hypotheses regarding the text of the Minor Poems.

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SIREN-MERMAID.

In the twelfth book of the *Odyssey*, the Sirens are somewhat vaguely described as two creatures that sit in an island-meadow, and enchant men with their clear song. In Euripides, *Helena*, 172, they are "winged maidens" (πτεροφόροι νεάνιδες). In various other classical writers, and regularly in ancient Greek and Roman art, they are part woman, part bird. See Anaxilas, quoted in Athenaeus XIII, 558 C; Apollonius Rhodius, *Arg.*, IV, 898-9; Ovid, *Metam.*, V, 553; Hera-

clitus, *De Incredibil.*, 14; Hyginus, *Fab.*, 125 and 141; Pliny, *N. H.*, X, 49, 70; Pausanias, IX, 343; Ausonius, *Griph. Tern. Num.*, 21; Servius, ad *Aen.*, V, 864; Claudian, *Rapt. Proserp.*, III, 254; Fulgentius, *Mythol.*, II, 8; Isidore, *Orig.*, XI, 3, 30; Baumeister, *Denkmäler des klassischen Altertums*, III, 1642 ff.; J. E. Harrison, *Myths of the Odyssey in Art and Literature*, pp. 146 ff.; G. Weicker, *Der Seelenvogel in der alten Litteratur und Kunst*, pp. 93 ff. In Plato's Vision of Er, *Rep.*, 617B, "upon each of the circles of the spindle is mounted a Siren" (ἐφ' ἐκάστου βεβηκέναι Σειρήνα). And the writers of the Septuagint felt free to substitute "siren" for "ostrich," *Micah*, I, 8, καὶ πένθος ὡς θυγατέρων σειρήνων.

In our earlier English poetry the Siren is regularly a mermaid. In his *Old English Miscellany* (EETS. 49), Dr. R. Morris prints a Bestiary which comes from a ms. of about the middle of the thirteenth century. Under the heading 'Natura Sirene,' it describes the "mereman" as "half man and half fis." See, also, the *Gest Historiale* of the Destruction of Troy, 13272-3,

fro the navell netherward noght but a fishe
And made as a maidon fro the myddes vp;

Chaucer, *Nonne Preestes Tale*, 450 ff.; *Romaunt of the Rose*, 682-4,

Though we mermaydens clepe hem here
In English, as in our usaunce,
Men clepen hem sereyns in Fraunce;

Gower, *Confessio Amantis*, I, 487-91,

Of body bothe and of visage
Lik unto wommen of yong age
Up fro the Navele on hih thei be,
And doun benethe, as men mai se,
Thei bere of fisshes the figure;

Shakespeare, *Comedy of Errors*, III, 2. 45-47; Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, II, 12, 31. Lyly's Syren, *Loves Metamorphosis*, IV, 2. 30, is "halfe fish, halfe flesh." In Boethius, *Consol.*, I, prosa I, Chaucer translates "sirenae" by "mermaids." In Alexander Barclay's third Egloge, "Mayrmaydes singing, abusing with their song," are mentioned among the dangers of the sea. Robert Greene speaks, in his *Mamillia*, of "Ulysses and the Mermaides," and so does Sir John Davies, in his *Soule of Man*. In William Browne's *Inner Temple Masque*, we have a return to classical au-

thority: "two Syrens, as they are described by Hyginus and Servius, with their upper parts like women to the navell, and the rest like a hen." But Shirley could still say, *Love's Cruelty*, iv, 2,

His mermaids cannot win me with their songs.

This shift of meaning—from "part woman, part bird" to "half woman, half fish"—is sometimes explained as being due to uniting the classical myth of the Sirens with the Teutonic and Northern superstition of the mermaid.¹ But it may not be necessary to assume any Teutonic influence. In French, Italian and Spanish literature, the Siren seems to have been always part fish.² So, for example, in Boiardo, *Orlando Innamorato*, II, 4. 36,

Una donzella à quel che sopra appare,
Ma quel che sotto l'acqua si dimena,
Tutto è di pesce ;

in Gervaise, *Bestiaire*, 306-7,

Feme est par desus le lonbril,
Et poisons desoz la ce[i]nture ;³

and in Wace, *Li Romans de Brut*, 737,

Poisson sunt del nombril aval.

See, also, Boccaccio, *Genealogia Deorum Gentilium*, VII, 20, "Has dicit Ovidius . . . et corpus ad umbilicum usque foemineum ; abinde infra pisces existentia" (which is not at all what Ovid says) ; Guido delle Colonne, *Historia Troiana*, XXXII, "Sunt eis ab umbilico superius formae femineae virgineum vultum habentes. ab umbilico vero citra omnem formam piscis observant" ;⁴ Bartholomew Anglicus, *De Proprietatibus Rerum*, xcvii, "And Physiologus saith it is a beast of the sea, wonderly shapen as a maid from the navel upward and a fish from the navel downward" ;⁵

¹ So R. W. Bond, *Complete Works of John Lyly*, III, 568.

² Dante's Siren "sovra i piè distorta," *Purg.* XIX, 8, is hardly an exception ; his description seems to have been affected by the story of Circe. For some modern stories of Sirens who are part fish see Paul Sébillot, *Le Folk-Lore de France*, Paris, 1905, II, 31 ff.

³ *Romania*, vol. I, p. 430.

⁴ This is probably the source of Gower's description "which in the tale of Troie I finde," and of the description in the *Gest Historiale* of the Destruction of Troy, Benoît de Sainte-Maure mentions the Sirens (28706 ff.), but does not describe their form.

⁵ R. Steele, *Medieval Lore*, London, 1893, p. 136.

and the *Liber Monstrorum*, published (from a Paris ms. of the tenth century) in M. Haupt's *Opuscula* (1876), II, 218 ff., "et a capite usque ad umbilicum sunt corpore virginali et humano generi simillimae, squamosas tamen piscium caudas habent."

We thus have the ancient tradition as to the form of the Sirens as late as the seventh century, while as early as the tenth century we find them described as part fish. The results so far obtained happen to agree with the result of Baumeister's study of the monuments, namely, that from the seventh century on the Sirens are represented with fish tails, after the manner of the Tritons, and still live on in popular imagination as mermaids.⁶ Whether the classical myth of the Tritons is sufficient to explain the transition, is perhaps uncertain. If it is not sufficient, possibly some "Germanist" can indicate just where any Teutonic or Northern influence came in.

In the passage already quoted from Bartholomew Anglicus, the statement that the Siren is a mermaid is given on the authority of 'Physiologus.' And the same authority is mentioned by Chaucer, *Nonne Preestes Tale*, 450-52 :

Song merier than the mermayde in the see ;
For Physiologus seith sikerly,
How that they singen wel and merily.⁷

But it should not be inferred from such passages that the original Greek treatise entitled 'Physiologus' described the Siren as part fish. The fourth century Greek version ("Epiphanius") does not mention the Sirens at all.⁸ Neither does the Armenian version published by Pitra⁹—a version based apparently on Greek mss. of the fourth and fifth centuries—nor the eighth century Latin version published by Cardinal Mai. And various later versions describe the Siren as part bird. The Greek version (thirteenth century)

⁶ "so sind sie im Mittelalter (vom 7. Jahrhundert ab) nach Art der Tritonweiber mit Fischschwänzen gebildet worden, und leben so noch jetzt in der Vorstellung der europäischen Seevölker als Meerweibchen."

⁷ Dr. Morris, EETS. 49, p. vii, sees in this passage a quotation from a particular Bestiary, "probably from the Latin version (*miris ge singeth this mere*)."

⁸ Migne, *Patrol. Graec.*, 43, 517 ff.

⁹ *Spicilegium Solesmense*, III, 374-90.

given by Pitra, III, 350, has τὸ δὲ ἡμῶν, πετεινοῦ ἔχουσι μορφήν. The Latin version (eleventh century) edited by Heider, p. 22, has "extrema parte usque ad pedes volatilis imaginem tenent." And an O. H. G. version (twelfth century) published in Hoffmann's *Fundgruben*, I, 25, says "dannen unze an die füzze nidine sint si gitan also uogile." Even the '*Fisiologus a Thetbaldo Italico compositus*' printed by Dr. Morris as the "original" of his *Bestiary* has

Ex umbilico sunt ut pulcherrima virgo,
Quodque facit monstrum volucres sunt inde deorsum.⁹

'Physiologus,' then, renders very little assistance toward tracing the literary tradition, being quoted, as we have seen, in support of two quite different opinions. Indeed, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, when the new opinion had not yet completely displaced the old, men could quote the same weighty authority for the statement that the Siren is at once part bird and part fish. Thus Hugo de S. Victore, *De Bestiis*, II, 32, has, "Syrenas tres fingunt fuisse ex parte virgines, et ex parte pisces, habentes squamas et caudam piscinam."¹⁰ Philippe de Thaün, *Bestiaire*, 1365, says,

E de feme at faiture
Entresqu'a la ceinture,
E les piez de falcun
E cue de peisson ;

and Pierre of Picardy, "iii manières de seraine sont, dont les ii sont moitié feme moitié poisson ; et l'autre moitié feme moitié oiseaux."¹¹ Compare, also, Guillaume le Clerc, *Le Bestiaire*, 1055-9 :

Car de la ceinture en amont
Est la plus bele ren del mont
A guise de femme formee.
L'autre partie est figuree
Come peisson ou com oisel,

and the thirteenth century *Image du Monde*,

⁹ Migne, *Patrol. Lat.*, 171, 1217 ff., prints this same *Bestiary* from a different ms.

¹⁰ Migne, *Patrol. Lat.*, 177, 78.

¹¹ Cahier et Martin, *Mélanges*, II, 172. Like Gervaise and Heider's Latin *Physiologus*, Pierre claims the authority of Johanz Boche d'or: "selon le latin dou livre que Physiologes, uns bons clers d'Athenes, traita et Jehans Crisostomus en choisi, en les natures des bestes et des oisiaus." But he has in mind a quite different form of Siren.

Austres i a c'ont de puceles
Testes et cors, dusqu' as mameles ;
Detrez poissons, eles d'oisiales,
Et est lors chans molt dous et bials.¹²

Brunetto Latini has, "Sereine, ce dient li autor, sont iii qui avoient semblance de feme dou chief jusque as cuisses ; mais de celui leu en aval avoient semblance de poisson, et avoient eles et ongles" (*Li Livres dou Trésor*, I, 5. 137). And there is another composite picture as late as Alciati's *Emblemata*,

Absque alis volucres, et cruribus absque puellas,
Rostro absque et piscis, qui tamen ore canant.¹³

Here it may be noted that another line in Alciati's description,

Illicitum est mulier, quae in piscem desinit atrum,
is a very clear echo of Horace, *Ars Poet.*, 3-4 :
ut turpiter atrum
desinat in piscem mulier formosa superne.

Another peculiarity of the modern Siren, which has suggested to some a Teutonic or Northern influence, is her golden hair. Lyly's Syren has "golden lockes," and sings, "with a Glasse in her hand and a Combe," *Loves Metamorphosis*, IV, 2. Compare Shakespeare, *Comedy of Errors*, III, 2. 48,

Spread o'er the silver waves thy golden hairs,

and Ben Jonson's Syrens, in *Neptune's Triumph*, "laying forth their tresses all along Upon the glassy waves." One thinks inevitably of the golden hair and sweet voice of Heine's Lorelei ; but the Lorelei herself seems to be a rather modern fancy.¹⁴ An older parallel is Boiardo's Siren, *Sonetti e Canzone*, CLXXIX, 41,

Con li ochii arguti e con le chiome bionde.

¹² G. Kastner, *Les Sirènes*, Paris, 1858, p. 42. On p. 66 Kastner quotes from another thirteenth century ms.: "Seraines sont uns monstres de mer qui ont cors de fame et coue de poison et ongles daigles."

¹³ Lyons edition, 1564, p. 132.

¹⁴ See H. Köchly's remark, quoted by Ameis-Hentze, *Anhang zu Homers Odysee* (1890): "Aus den süßen Stimmen der Seirenen ist, beiläufig bemerkt, erst in diesem Jahrhundert die angebliche Volkssage von der Loreley gemacht worden"; and Meyer's *Konversations-Lexikon*, XII, 712 (1905): "Die Sage von der Zauberin oder Nixe Lorelei . . . wurde von Kl. Brentano um 1800 erfunden."

And Sannazaro has "auricomae Sirenis," *Ecl.*, iv, 60. Perhaps it is worth mentioning that various classical sea-nymphs have golden hair:¹⁵ Philoxenus, 6 B., χρυσοβόστρυχε Γαλάτεια, Virgil, *Geor.*, iv, 339, "flava Lycorias," iv, 352, "(Arethusae) flavum caput." In Bacchylides, xvi, 107, the daughters of Nereus wear "fillets of woven gold" (χρυσέοπλοκοι ταινίαι). In Tibullus, i, 5. 43-46, it is implied that Thetis was golden-haired:

Non facit hoc verbis, facie tenerisque lacertis
devovet et flavis nostra puella comis.
Talis ad Haemonium Nereis Pelea quondam
vectast frenato caerula pisce Thetis.

Moreover, Virgil's sea-nymphs have flowing locks, "caesariem effusae nitidam," *Geor.*, iv, 337, and Ovid definitely mentions the combing of Galatea's hair, "pectendos praebet Galatea capillos," *Met.* xiii, 737. The poets of the Renaissance have helped to popularize such classical fancies. Sannazaro has "flavos resoluta capillos Cymodoce," *Ecl.*, i, 84, and even "flavicomae Amphitritae," i, 99. Pontanus applies Virgil's "flavum caput" to his water-nymph, *Meteororum Liber*,¹⁶ and Baiſ's Naiad has "beaux cheveux blonds," *Éclogue*, xix. So has Barahona de Soto's nymph, *Égloga*, i,

en las ondas cristalinas
Mostrastes tu cabeza orlada de oro.

In Garcilaso de la Vega's second sonnet, which is a paraphrase of Virgil, *Geor.*, iv, 345 ff., the nymphs have "rubias cabezas," and in Camoens, *Egloga* vii, Galatea has "cabellos louros."

The Homeric Sirens appeared to Odysseus in a "windless calm," (γαλήνη νηνεμία) *Od.* xii, 168; the Argonauts approached their home in a gentle breeze, νῆα δ' εὐκραῖς ἀνεμος φέρειν, Apollonius Rhodius, iv, 891; and so did Aeneas and his company, *Aen.*, v, 848, "salis placidi vultum fluctusque quietos." And the most characteristic feature of the whole classical tradition is their sweet song. So Hesiod, as reported in Eustathius, 1710, 40, Ἡσιόδος ἐμυθεύσατο ὑπὸ Σειρήνων καὶ τοὺς ἀνέμους θέλεσθαι, a passage with which

¹⁵ Cp. G. Kastner, *Les Sirènes*, p. 43: "La plupart des familles aquatiques qui peuplent les légendes formées sous l'empire de l'odinisisme et des autres cultes du Nord tenaient encore de plus près, à vrai dire, aux familles des Nymphes et des Tritons qu'au petit groupe isolé des Sirènes classiques."

¹⁶ Venice edition, 1518, p. 133.

we may compare Shakespeare, *Midsummer-Night's Dream*, ii, 1. 150,

And heard a mermaid on a dolphin's back
Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath
That the rude sea grew civil at her song,

and Milton, *Comus*, 252,

Who, as they sung, would take the prisoned soul
And lap it in Elysium: Scylla wept,
And chid her barking waves into attention,
And fell Charybdis murmured soft applause.

The modern Siren, however, is often regarded as a sign of storm,¹⁷ and she sometimes utters a doleful strain. Compare G. Pascoli, *La Sirena*,

dal mare nebbioso un lamento
si leva: il tuo canto, o Sirena,

Gil Vicente, *Triunfo del Invierno*,

Haré cantar las sirenas
Y peligrar á las naves, etc.,

and Sannazaro, *Arcadia*, Prosa 12, "una Sirena, la quale sopra uno scoglio amaramente piangeva."¹⁸ This double change was probably effected in the middle ages; certainly, the ancient story had been altered before the days of Bartholomew Anglicus, "and this wonderful beast is glad and merry in tempest, and sad and heavy in fair weather,"¹⁹ and Philippe de Thaün, *Bes-tiaire*, 1361,

Serena en mer hante,
Cuntre tempeste chante
E plur è en bel tens,
Itels est sis talenz.

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¹⁷ Cp. P. Sébillot, *Le Folk-Lore de France*, ii, 35.

¹⁸ Shakespeare's "Siren tears," *Sonn.*, cxix, and perhaps the line at the beginning of T. Lodge's *Rosalynde*, "The Syrens teares doe threaten mickle griefe," may be due to the Euhemeristic interpretation of the ancient myth which made the Sirens hetairai or meretrices. Ben Jonson has, "The heathen man could stop his ears with wax against the harlot of the sea," *Bartholomew Fair*, iii, 1. St. Jerome says that this interpretation is as old as Paphnagathus (Migne, *Patrol. Lat.*, 27, 319). It is repeated in Heraclitus, *De Incredibil.*, 14, and often later, Servius, *Aen.*, v, 864, Fulgentius, *Mythol.*, ii, 8, Isidore, *Orig.*, xi, 3. 30, Boccaccio, *Geneal. Deor. Gentil.*, vii, 20, etc. One or two other classical passages (Euripides, *Hel.*, 169, Seneca, *Herc. Oet.*, 190) and the sculptured Sirens on various Attic tombs suggest a still different conception of these creatures, or a different function. See G. Weicker, *Der Seelenvogel in der alten Literatur und Kunst*, pp. 8 ff., 171 ff.

¹⁹ R. Steele, *Medieval Lore*, London, 1893, p. 136.